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Dear Friends,

The theme of our 2012 Annual Meeting, Cultivating a Culture of Call, reflects a priority our conference has engaged through the TAP program, and now through PATHWAYS, through developing our relationship with Lancaster Theological Seminary, and through working with our churches. The priority is that of identifying, cultivating and equipping leadership for the emerging United Church of Christ.

The meeting will feature workshops, a keynoter, Rev. Holly MillerShank, Executive Minister of MESA (Ministry

Excellence, Support and Authorization) of the national church, and many opportunities to share together ways in which we can be a "generative" conference in the developing of leadership.

There is of course more to our Annual Meeting. This is a time of gathering and fellowship for us. Some years ago a colleague attending the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting for the first time remarked to me, "the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference is like Brigadoon. It rises out of the mists each year at the same time, and its people gathering, sing, dance, feast and celebrate, then it fades back into the mists, to gather again in another year." We are a people who have been challenged by the distances that separate us, the diversities of the cultures which we nurture, and so much more. But there remains a special bond that is greater than all that has sought to tug us apart through the years, the bond of unity that we know in the Christ who heals, reconciles and restores to wholeness. I hope you will be able to be with us in Birmingham to let the generous Southern hospitality wash over you, share fellowship, and celebrate and worship together with sisters and brothers from across our five states. The theme of our 2012 Annual Meeting, Cultivating a Culture of Call, reflects a priority our conference has engaged through the TAP program, and now through PATHWAYS, through developing our relationship with Lancaster Theological Seminary, and through working with our churches. The priority is that of identifying, cultivating and equipping leadership for the emerging United Church of Christ. The meeting will feature workshops, a keynoter, Rev. Holly MillerShank, Executive Minister of MESA (Ministry Excellence, Support and Authorization) of the national church, and many opportunities to share together ways in which we can be a "generative" conference in the developing of leadership. There is of course more to our Annual Meeting. This is a time of gathering and fellowship for us. Some years ago a colleague attending the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting for the first time remarked to me, "the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference is like Brigadoon. It rises out of the mists each year at the same time, and its people gathering, sing, dance, feast and celebrate, then it fades back into the mists, to gather again in another year." We are a people who have been challenged by the distances that separate us, the diversities of

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Peace.

Tim Downs
Conference Minister

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Summer Feeding Program, Pre-k through 8th grade tutoring in Math and Reading and the Graduation Exam Preparation class are FREE! Lunch is served Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. UNITY ACADEMY TUTORING is every Saturday from 9-11:30.a.m.

Registration is required. For more information call the church at 334-288-2007 or email gcjpru@knology.net.

Unity United Church of Christ is located at 2311 Oxford Drive, Montgomery, AL 36111

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Nashville, TN took a stand for justice at the 2012 Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) - A Demonstration to Raise Our Voices Against For-Profit Incarceration. A memo written by Rev. Marvin L. Morgan, Interim Pastor, states, "The violence rate is higher; the number of sexual assaults among incarcerated women is higher; the overall danger to those detained or imprisoned is higher; the risk of injury to staff is higher and the corporation's margin of profit is higher."Learn more about CCA by reading more of the memo and the flyer.

First Congregational Church UCC, Talladega, AL is celebrating its 144th Church Anniversary and Homecoming the celebration is **"Freeness of Salvation"** from Rev. 22:17: "And whosoever will, let him take from the water freely." The guest speaker will be Rev. Kathy Clark, Associate Conference

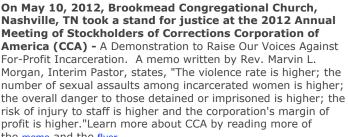
First Congregational Church UCC, Atlanta, GA is celebrating its 145th Anniversary Worship and Building Dedication Service on Sunday, May 27, at 11 a.m. EDT. The theme for the anniversary is "Celebrating 145 Years of Faithful Service: Remember, Renew, Rejoice." Guest minister for this historic commemoration service is Rev. Dr. James Alexander Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church New York City and President of the Healing of the Nations. After the morning service, they will dedicate the new East Wing and Garden. There will also be a dedication of a Toni Morrison Bench by the Road Project, the first site in Atlanta approved by the Toni Morrison Society.

Hands On Atlanta and Earth Day help revive Central CUCC's forest! Saturday, April 21, was an exciting day at Central CUCC. It was Earth Day

and Global Youth Service Day. The forest of Central Congregational UCC was selected by Hands On Atlanta as a volunteer site for 50 children and youth volunteers--ages 10 to 24, mostly high school students, who have an interest in the environment. Central's 9 acres of forest is a precious oasis of trees and native Georgia plants in the middle of an urban environment that was recently designated as a sanctioned Wildlife Refuge. Our goal is to clean up and maintain the forest for future generations of UCCer's to enjoy.

Unity UCC, Montgomery, AL is seeking donations for their Unity Summer Feeding Program. Writes Pastor Bennie Liggins, Unity Academy, our summer tutorial program, recently discovered that children who receive free breakfast/lunch during the school year often go without during the summer. We have been led to step into that gap. We can only finance 30 children; however we have the capacity to take care of 100 children. You can sponsor 1 child (that is feed for the summer) for a one-time tax deductible contribution of \$60.00. Checks should be made payable to: Unity Summer Feeding Pgm and mailed to Summer Feeding Program, Post Office Box 20698, Montgomery, AL 36120. Please see the flyer to learn

#### **Local Church News - June 2012**



on Sunday, May 20, at the 11 a.m. worship service. The theme of

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#### Lifting Up... June 2012

We recently received news of the death of Reverend Edward M. Brown, III on May 23. Ed was the husband of Reverend Joyce Myers-Brown and began his ministry in the congregational church as a student worker and ecumenical worker in Europe and the United States. He continued with an illustrious career on behalf of the American Missionary Association during the civil rights movement, working across the South in voter registration, racial reconciliation, integration, and advocacy for justice. We celebrate a life and ministries, full and well lived, and hold Joyce in our prayers.

We were saddened to receive news of the death of Dorothy Kavar, the mother of Lou Kavar. Dorothy lived with her son in Atlanta. Lou is a member of Central Congregational Church UCC in Atlanta, GA, a minister with standing in the Georgia-South Carolina Association of the Southeast Conference, a professor with Capella University and a spiritual director.

Rev. Larry Evans, pastor of Midway Congregational UCC in Midway, GA will undergo a total knee replacement in a few weeks. We wish Larry a successful surgery and speedy recovery.

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#### Feature Focus - June 2012



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Staff members at the SEC offices are so excited about this year's Annual Meeting! To prepare for the upcoming meeting we asked our featured speakers, Holly MillerShank and Elizabeth Clement, to say a word or two about what it means to create a culture of call

Holly says "In order to successfully create a culture of call in our congregations we need to first free ourselves of our stereotypes of ministry and ministers. God is able to imagine all things, we too need to free ourselves to imagine ways in which the gifts and talents of people from a variety of life-perspectives can enhance the work of the church. Through God all things are indeed possible, including the opening of our own hearts and minds to see mission and ministry in new ways, and risk calling forth both expected and unexpected people into service for God's church."

Elizabeth offers a garden scene to spark our imaginations as we consider what it takes to cultivate church leaders.

"My neighbor, Mrs. Latimore, has a green thumb and such a lovely garden. Earlier this Spring, when I said how beautiful everything was coming up, she wailed, "But I forgot to plant my bulbs last October. There will be no tulips for Easter!" Clearly, many other things had been done, but what is not planted does not grow.

The role of the congregations and its members to developing leaders for the church is like the garden and Mrs. L to her (missing) tulips. Where there is a lively interplay of caring relationships and "tending" over time, our purposed effort in one season brings new life and possibility in another—or not.

Local churches that are cultures of call notice, name and nurture God's call. They mimic the rhythms of cultivation in their lives together—like a community garden—preparing the ground, planting seeds, and tending to each other's growth in faith and life. They pay attention to the people God calls (all), they create opportunities to reflect on each one's gifts and how God summons them, and they walk together as they listen for and move toward faithful response.

Churches that are like well-oiled machines with many active parts and programs doing this and that may not cultivate

call. A culture of call is more like a working farm, with people depending on each other for nourishing relationships, growing together in God's purposes. In a church where Christians hope to serve God and their neighbors, cultivation never stops.

When Jesus cultivated the ones he expected to lead his followers after he was gone, his approach took the rhythm of a long, slow walk with friends, in a conversation about what mattered in the Reign of God, teaching and learning and improvising together as they faced the realities of life on their way. And it worked. What if our churches took up the careful tending that promises blooms in a season yet to come? It sounds odd and unrealistic. But, as Paul assured the earliest church, some will plant and others will water, and God will give the increase. (1 Cor 3:6) Thanks be to God.

The online registration link is now available for the 2012 Annual Meeting. Annual Reports will be posted on or around June 1, 2012.

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#### **Conference News - June 2012**



Kathy Harvey Nelson, Director of Continuing Education for Lancaster Theological Seminary, enjoys a Korean meal with Sarah Kim, Associate for Theological Education and Associate Dean of PATHWAYS. Rev. Harvey Nelson, who serves as the LTS liaison to the PATHWAYS program, was recently in Atlanta for a PATHWAYS planning meeting. The Southeast Conference is partnering with Lancaster Theological Seminary in offering PATHWAYS not only in the SEC, but throughout the United Church of Christ as an alternative path toward authorized ministry. For more information, visitwww.pathwaystheologicaleducation.org.

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**Rev. Ray McGinnis, author of Writing the Sacred**, was recently in Marietta, Georgia where he offered a sacred writing workshop at Pilgrimage UCC. Seen with him are Rev. Kim Buchanan, pastor of Pilgrimage, and Minister Regina Drake, of Victory UCC in Stone Mountain, GA. While in the Southeast Conference, McGinnis also offered

workshops at Peace Congregational UCC in Clemson, SC, and Decatur UCC in Decatur, GA.



The Talladega Murals which have been restored and will be on display at the High Museum and other places around the country. Talladega College was founded by the American Missionary Association and featured in the book, On the Heels of Freedom, the oral history project of the AMA in the SEC authored by Joyce Hollyday. Click on here to read more.

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Cameron Barr graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School. Cameron, a member of Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville, TN has accepted a call to ministry as an associate on the staff of Plymouth Congregational UCC, Des Moines, IA. Charmaine Johnson, member of Victory for the World UCC in Stone Mountain, GA graduated from Candler School of Theology. Leah Lyman Waldron, who also graduated from Candler School of Theology, is the co-pastor of Praxis UCC, Atlanta, GA with her husband Chris Lyman Waldron.

Congratulations to David Templeton, hospice chaplain in Savannah and member of Circular Congregational UCC in Charleston, SC on his upcoming marriage. David will marry Margaret "Maggie" Harris Lee, LCSW, private practice psychotherapist, and mother of 2 sons. David and Maggie will marry at Christ Church Episcopal in Savannah where they first met on June 9th.

On Sunday, May 20th a gala event with almost 2,000 people present took place to celebrate Andrew Young's 80th birthday. Ambassador Young, a member of First Congregational Church UCC, Atlanta, GA, who served his first call at Bethany Congregational Church UCC, Thomasville, GA, and Evergreen Congregational Church UCC, Beachton GA, was raised in Central Congregational Church UCC, New Orleans, LA. He has had a distinguished career as a leader in the civil rights movement, mayor of Atlanta, a congressman from Georgia and as ambassador to the United Nations. He served as the honorary chair of the recent capital campaign for the Southeast Conference. Ambassador Young continues to be active, promoting development in Africa and engaging with multiple non-profit and educational organizations.

Congratulations to Doug Farmer, a member of Circular Congregational UCC, Charleston, SC, who was licensed for a ministry with the Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy, which works with first responders and those affected by tragedy and disasters.

We celebrate the granting of privilege of call in the United Church of Christ to Amani Legagneur, manager of chaplaincy services in the Northside Hospital, Atlanta, GA. Amani is a member of Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta, GA and formerly authorized by the Seventh Day Adventists.

Welcome to Tim Meadows on the occasion of his transfer of ministerial standing from the St. Louis Association of the Missouri Mid-south Conference to the Georgia-South Carolina Association. Tim was the founding pastor of Holy Trinity Community UCC, Memphis, TN and is currently serving a church of the United Reformed Church in Liverpool, UK. He has joined the Virginia-Highland Church UCC, Atlanta, GA.

We welcome Jeremy Rutledge as the newly elected pastor of Circular Congregational UCC, Charleston, SC. Jeremy has served as pastor of Covenant Church in Houston TX; a church affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists and the American Baptist Churches and comes to the UCC by privilege of call.

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## **Community Demonstration: Raising Our Voices against For-Profit Incarceration**

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is the nation's largest owner and operator of privatized (for-profit) correctional and detention facilities and one of the largest prison operators in the U.S., behind only the federal government and three states.

The 2012 Annual Meeting of Stockholders of CCA will be held at 10:00 am on Thursday, May 10, 2012 at the company's Nashville headquarters at 10 Burton Hills Boulevard. As stockholders arrive that morning, we would like to organize and join with like-minded individuals opposed to the for-profit prison industry and its business practices and voice our opposition - calling for divestment and reform - outside CCA's headquarters.

# **Take Action**

Demonstration: Thursday, May 10, 2012 9:00-11:00 am

CCA Headquarters, 10 Burton Hills Blvd, Nashville, TN

Planning Meeting: Saturday, May 5, 2012 3:00-5:00 pm

Brookmeade Congregational Church, UCC, 700 Bresslyn Road, Nashville, TN

Contact: Organizer - Brookmeade Congregational Church, UCC

Rev. Marvin Morgan, Pastor Lisa Croney, Coordinator

404.550.2842 615.377.9057

mlmorg@bellsouth.net lcroneyart@gmail.com

#### Issues

CCA maximizes profits by keeping costs low and beds full. Adding a profit motive to detention and incarceration creates two levels of problems for a just society:

CCA has a vested interest in keeping prison and detention beds full.

Until 2010, CCA was a member of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC has pushed for legislation that calls for harsh sentences, mandatory minimums and derailing comprehensive immigration reform.

CCA has spent about \$17.6 million lobbying Congress and federal agencies between 2000 and 2010.

 Cost-cutting measures employed by privatized prisons, jails, and detention centers pose dangers to the health and safety of both those detained or imprisoned and the staff of the facilities.

Low-cost operations come at a human cost. The prison industry cuts expenses by paying guards and staff less. Private prisons frequently fail to staff facilities at contractually required levels – understaffing saves money. Rates of violence are higher in for-profit facilities.

According to Amnesty International, 1 in 10 women incarcerated in federal and state facilities are victims of sexual assault. In private prisons, it is 1 in 4 women.

# What are we calling for?

Please attend the planning meeting on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-5:00 pm at Brookmeade Congregational Church at 700 Bresslyn Road in Nashville, where we will discuss our call for action and strategy. Possible ideas include:

- Bring media attention to opposition to the for-profit private prison industry: Demonstration and Letter to the Editor of The Tennessean
- Call for divestment: Encourage shareholders to divest CXW from their portfolios for ethical reasons
- Call for reform

## Vote "Yes" on the Shareholder Proxy Measure

At the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, a proxy measure has been put up by a shareholder who works for reformation of the private prison industry. It calls for CCA to issue twice yearly reports on its efforts to reduce prisoner rape and sexual abuse within its facilities, and include statistical data on those incidents. CCA's Directors are unanimously opposed to this measure, asking shareholders to vote "no" and wait for under-development Department of Justice mandates. The measure is supported by organizations including the National Center for Domestic and Sexual Violence, National Organization for Women, National Lawyers Guild and Human Rights Defense Center.